



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Internal Services Department

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To: Each Supervisor

From: Dave Lambertson 
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Subject: **UPDATE ON 3-1-1 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

On January 27, 2004, ISD submitted the sixth in a series of periodic status reports to your Board on the utilization of 3-1-1 by the City of Los Angeles. In the six months since, 3-1-1 call volume has increased; however, this is in part due to the routing of Graffiti Hotline calls to the 3-1-1 Call Center. The accompanying Board Report summarizes 3-1-1 developments to date and statistics worthy of note.

The City's FY 04/05 budget, as adopted, will maintain 3-1-1 services at their existing levels, but does not include funds for significant additional improvements and services.

The County is currently involved in assisting INFO LINE of Los Angeles County to develop the business plan for its 2-1-1 service offering, which will focus primarily on health and human services needs. Because many of these services are provided by the County and/or other government entities, 2-1-1 may in certain circumstances satisfy some of the same needs as the Los Angeles 3-1-1 program, but on a more regional basis. The specific services to be provided by 2-1-1 have not been finalized. INFO LINE has an MOU with the City's 3-1-1 Call Center and the two groups are working together to ensure that calls are sent to the correct information source.

ISD will continue to attend meetings of the City of Los Angeles, 3-1-1 Steering Committee. We will report to the Board as enhancements to the 3-1-1 system occur and/or new services are added. We will report again in January 2005 or when significant activity warrants.

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Attachment

- c. Chief Administrative Officer
Board of Supervisors, Executive Office
Chief Information Officer
Department Heads

STATUS REPORT ON THE USE OF 3-1-1 IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

PURSUANT TO A JANUARY 18, 2000 BOARD MOTION

Summary and Recommendations:

In operation less than two years, the City of Los Angeles' 3-1-1 service continues to evolve and expand in spite of fiscal constraints, and the number of calls answered in recent months reflects significant increases over prior months. The operating budget for the current fiscal year is \$4.5 million, unchanged from last year. Planned growth and expansion activities, including public relations and marketing campaigns, have been deferred due to budgetary limitations. The City's 3-1-1 Steering Committee meets less frequently now, in that the program is fully operational and no longer requires close scrutiny. Meanwhile, a County-wide 2-1-1 system is set to debut within the coming year, providing a complement to the City's 3-1-1 service and affording residents easy, three-digit dialing for referrals, including some County services.

Because 3-1-1 is increasingly meeting the needs of the City and its residents, and 2-1-1 services are on the near horizon, the County should work to ensure a close, cooperative working relationship between the two services. INFO LINE has an MOU with the City's 3-1-1 Call Center and the two groups are working together to ensure that calls are sent to the correct information source.

Background:

On January 18, 2000, the Board of Supervisors directed the Internal Services Department, the Chief Information Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Sheriff and Fire Chief to work with the City of Los Angeles and other cities to develop a plan for the coordinated and consistent use of 3-1-1 throughout the Los Angeles region.

Early on, ISD met with the Independent Cities Association and the Contract Cities Association, and continues to regularly attend meetings of the City of Los Angeles 3-1-1 Steering Committee. Except for the City of Los Angeles, none of the cities has expressed an interest in providing 3-1-1 service.

The City of Los Angeles officially began providing 3-1-1 service on November 7, 2002. In addition to calls placed directly to 3-1-1, three of the City's existing 7-digit numbers (City Hall Information), and two toll-free numbers are now answered in the 3-1-1 center.

City of Los Angeles 3-1-1 – Current Program Description:

Because 3-1-1 is now fully operational, the Steering Committee does not need to invest as much of its resources to ensure steady progress. An increased presence could result should significant funding be allocated for the Citywide Service Request System, but day-to-day workings of 3-1-1 don't require Steering Committee oversight.

The City's FY 04/05 budget, as adopted, will maintain 3-1-1 service at the existing levels, but does not include funds for significant additional improvements and services.

Monthly 3-1-1 call volume made some of its greatest increases during the second quarter of 2004, reaching a high of 43,461 in June, compared to 33,840 in April and 36,841 in May. Management attributes this 24% increase over 90 days—in part—to calls received on the Graffiti Hotline, which was absorbed by 3-1-1 during the period, as well as public service announcements broadcast on UHF television stations, notices published in the Downtown News, and 3-1-1 booths at various fairs. Prior to month's end, July call volume was projected to equal or exceed that of June. If this volume is sustained, the cost per call would be roughly \$8.34 per call.

The Los Angeles Police Department recently reconfigured its interactive voice response telephone system, reducing to four the number of options presented to callers. The fourth option provides routing to 3-1-1, and it is believed that this has also contributed to call volume increases. Conversely, the 3-1-1 center has routed 13 calls to 9-1-1 since January 1, 2004 a relatively small number indicating there is little cause for confusion between 9-1-1 emergency services and 3-1-1 government services.

Approximately one-third of the calls answered at the center are dialed directly to 3-1-1, with the remaining two-thirds placed to other City 7-digit numbers or the toll-free number. Bureau of Sanitation services, such as bulky object pick-up, are among the most frequent service requests. The 3-1-1 center also accepts various Police and Fire Department permit renewals for the Office of Finance and requests for street light maintenance.

Consolidation of the existing call center operated by the City's Department of Building and Safety is expected to occur this fiscal year, possibly before December 31, 2004. This will result in a significant increase in monthly call volume. The Building and Safety operators will become members of the 3-1-1 staff, and no immediate need for additional personnel is expected to result from the consolidation.

The 3-1-1 operators use an Internet-accessible database (Citywide Services Directory), to retrieve specific information about City departments and services.

The Internet site is also accessible to the public (<http://www.lacity.org/call311/>), and provides information about City services, locations, phone numbers, hours of operation and other general information. The web site receives significantly less direct traffic than the 3-1-1 call center.

3-1-1 promotional materials used thus far include public service announcements broadcast on UHF television stations, bus placards, printed fliers, 3-1-1 pins, pens, bumper stickers and refrigerator magnets.

Prospects for Enhancement:

Bids have been received and will be opened soon in response to an RFP seeking development of a service intake and monitoring system common to all departments served by the 3-1-1 center. This will eliminate the present need for operators to toggle among various department or service-specific computer input formats and is intended to streamline the reporting process. It will also make it easier for program managers to track service requests from the time of input through completion of work. A funding source for this enhancement will need to be identified, as it is not included in the current budget.

The County is currently involved in assisting INFO LINE of Los Angeles County develop the business plan for its 2-1-1 service, which will focus on health and human services needs and referrals. Because many of these services are provided by the County and/or other government entities, 2-1-1 will in many ways satisfy some of the needs addressed by 3-1-1.

Call Completion Using 3-1-1 and 2-1-1 – Land Lines

The routing of calls for 3-1-1 and 2-1-1 are distinctly different:

- For 3-1-1, the call routing infrastructure is essentially city based. As such, only those calls made from land lines located within Los Angeles City limits are routed to the City of Los Angeles' call center. If another city besides Los Angeles implemented a 3-1-1 service, a caller in that city would be connected to their city's call center, not the City of Los Angeles call center.
- For 2-1-1, the call routing infrastructure is designed to support a regional (i.e., County-wide approach). Regardless of the city or unincorporated area from where a call to 2-1-1 originates, the call will go to the INFO LINE call center.

Cell Phone Access

Verizon Wireless and AT&T Wireless are the only cellular carriers not permitting subscriber access to 3-1-1. Because AT&T Wireless is being acquired by

Cingular Wireless, Verizon Wireless, with the nation's largest subscriber base, may soon be the lone holdout.

Access to 3-1-1 via cell phone only works if the call is picked up by a receiver antenna within the Los Angeles city limits. When 2-1-1 service is available on cell phones, the caller will be connected to the INFO LINE call center if the receiver antenna is anywhere within Los Angeles County.

3-1-1 Referrals to County Services:

Frequently, calls are received requesting regional or local information or services provided by the County or other cities. Calls requesting County services are normally routed to the County's general information number. It is difficult for the City staff to accommodate these calls, as the relevant information is not included in the 3-1-1 center's Citywide Services Directory (CSD). The City has expressed interest in working with the County to develop a section of the CSD addressing County service requests. This would enable the 3-1-1 staff to properly route calls to the appropriate County offices.

Conclusion:

The City of Los Angeles's 3-1-1 service has become a mature, stable operation. In the absence of additional funding, substantial expansion of the 3-1-1 call center is unlikely.

The County is working to ensure that the City of Los Angeles' 3-1-1 call center and INFO LINE, the chosen 2-1-1 service provider continue to cooperate to provide the best possible service to all callers.

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